FEASIBILITY STUDY
DIVISION OF PERSONNEL
NOVEMBER 15, 1993

The Division of Personnel requested, as a project for FY94, a
feasibility study in the area of employment applications. The
purpose of the study is to look at the application process as it is
conducted now, to determine .if imaging could be used to facilitate
the process, which is the tracking and processing of those documents
and the early disposal of the applications in order to discontinue
the current manual filing system.

BACKGROUND:

The division currently processes upward of 400,000 pieces of paper
in the processing of applications during a calendar year.
Applications arrive on the average of upward to 200 per day.
Keeping the application and the supporting documentation sent with
it, along with the correspondence that takes place over the life of
the application, is a major undertaking.

Applications are currently tracked, for the most part, with a manual
routing slip. An application could be on any of three or four
desks, in a given unit, within the application processing section.
The only way to find the application is if someone knows where it is
or a search is undertaken to locate it. Sometimes it takes as much
as forty-five (45) minutes or more to locate an application when a
request is made for information contained within that file. At
times as many as three or four persons are looking for the same
application. The application is not always where it is thought to
be, as someone may have needed it to process a different inquiry
related to the application. Each time an application is handled by
someone in the processing flow; an out card must be prepared to
identify who has the application and where in process it is, this
sometimes does not happen. Each of these manual processes inhibit
the flow of the information and also are a point at which errors can
be introduced either through omission of a step or incorrect
information being recorded.

The applications are stored using manual files. This allows for
misfiling and sometimes lost documents (that were ready for filing

The applicant is then scheduled automatically by the system into the appropriate test cycle or cycles. Some applications are received too late to be entered into the system for automatic scheduling and are forwarded to the supervisor of data entry who adds them to the test schedule using a manual process. The data entry task is the last to be performed and is only done after all other processing for the application has taken place.

RESULTS OF STUDY:

After viewing the current application process and attending the
various vendor presentations and demonstrations it appears
significant improvement could be made by implementing imaging within
the application processing cycle in the Division of Personnel.

Before imaging can be implemented within the Division of Personnel a
policy must be developed and a procedure put in place to enact that
policy.

That policy will need to describe the imaging process as it supports
and becomes the record of the business process. It would need to
describe in the regular course of business or activity that the
division has kept or recorded any memorandum, writing, entry, print,
representation or event. That in the regular course of business has
caused any or all of the same to be recorded, copied or reproduced
by any photographic, photostatic, microfilm, micro-card, miniature
photographic or other process which accurately reproduces or forms a
durable medium for so reproducing the original. If so, the original
may be destroyed in the regular course of business unless held in a
custodial or fiduciary capacity or unless its preservation is
required by law.

Imaging could be used in the following areas to facilitate
application processing.

> **Reception Area:** Currently applications are received and
> processed by the receptionist and forwarded to the OSS unit.
> At this time no mechanism is in place to track an individual
> application. By implementing imaging and entering sufficient
> information to identify an application the tracking of same
> could be started before it leaves the reception area. Also
> at this time the application could be forwarded either manually
> or through the imaging system to the data entry section for
> initial processing in the scheduling system.

> If the applicant is already in the scheduling system any updates
> needed could be made at this time and, if a new applicant, they
> could be established in the system at this time. After the
> application is imaged it can be designated for disposal rather
> than being sent to be filed.

> Also, when a phone call is received the receptionist could enter
> name or social security number to determine where in process an
> application is and in some instances provide the required
> information. If needed the receptionist could forward the phone
> call to the appropriate person and they would know where the
> application is and be in a position to respond in a timely
> manner to the request for information.

> **Data Entry:** Currently processing by data entry is the last step

in the application processing cycle. If information is not
clear or it is missing, the operator must take the application
to the OSS unit or analyst for the additional information before
processing can be completed.

With the current design of the form, the identification number
entered on page three (3) must be keyed which requires rotation
of the document by data entry to be able to read it. If this
number was on the front of the document, it could be identified
·after scanning as an index to be used in the retrieval process.

If the application was sent by the imaging system to data entry
the document could be routed by the system to the appropriate
entity to make the needed clarifications and/or corrections and
then forwarded back to data entry for completion of their tasks.
This would reduce or eliminate the need for data entry to
deliver the application to other areas thus saving time in data
entry.

Operations Support Staff: Currently the OSS unit receives
an application from several sources and must keep track of
where the application came from and who it is to be returned
to or forwarded to.

With the application imaged the work flow could have steps,
within the application process, automated and routing could be
done automatically after each step in the process is completed.

Requests for information to be typed to solicit additional
information from the applicant, to complete processing of their
application could be automated using the capability of WINDOWS
software to have more than one application active at one time.
The request could be viewed in one window and the form prepared
in another window without the need to use a typewriter to
complete a preprinted form.

With imaging, when phone calls are received in the unit it would
require just a few keystrokes to answer a question rather than
the several minutes required currently to locate the
application.

The OSS unit also does coding and other notations on the
document which will require the use of notes or a like feature
to attach to the document and be made a part of.

When the Analyst Section has completed work on the document and
the OSS unit has completed processing it can be routed to data
entry to have the scores and class codes entered into the WANG
scheduling system to have the exam(s) scheduled as required to
complete the application processing cycle.

Analyst Section: Currently the analyst must handle the
application file and all the documents contained in it manually.
The possibility of documents becoming separated from the file

but somehow got "misplaced") and a search is again required to retrieve the application. A considerable amount of floor space is required for the manual files. It is a time consuming process to leave ones work area to go to the manual files to retrieve an application for additional processing or returning the application to the file.

Applications are received in the division and processed initially in the reception area. At this time they are time and date stamped, sorted with the information available and out cards prepared for correspondence as necessary.

They are then forwarded manually to the Operations Support Staff (OSS) for processing. The OSS unit logs the application in, assigns an identification number, enters the date and an out card is updated or prepared. The OSS unit also logs onto the MESH system to determine if the application is for a position in which the applicant has already been appointed, and/or to verify if the applicant is a current employee. The OSS unit sorts the applications by position/class code and manually passes them on to the team leader, who reviews the applications for completeness. If all is in order the team leader forwards them manually to the analyst section for the next step in the processing cycle.

The team leader for the analyst section tallies the number of applications, screens for special needs and then distributes them manually to an individual analyst for processing. Each analyst reviews the documentation contained within the application to determine if the applicant is qualified for the position being requested to be tested for. If additional information is needed, a request is prepared to forward to the OSS unit for preparation of the necessary documents to obtain the needed information. This is a manual process and is labor intensive and, as the information is written down and the necessary forms prepared, the possibility for errors exists (wrong SSN, misspelled names, etc.), as well as the documents becoming lost.

After the individual analyst has processed the application for the positions assigned for their review, it is forwarded back to the analyst team leader to determine if other positions need to be reviewed and, if so, the process is repeated until all positions have been reviewed. Most applications can be completed by a single analyst when all positions being applied for are in the same category/classification. The analyst determines the exam components, codes component, cycle, priority and specialty on the application. They also prepare the rating for the Education and Experience portion of the exam. If additional information is needed a form letter is prepared to request it and a tickler card is prepared to track the request. After the applicant is certified eligible for the position requested, the application is forwarded to the data entry unit for entering into the application scheduling system.

exists. The lead analyst must sort the applications by
position/class code and assign them to the analyst that works
those particular positions.

After the analyst has worked the application, it is coded and
returned to the lead analyst for review and forwarding either to
the analyst for further work or back to the OSS unit for
processing.

The analyst must prepare a request for information, code the
application information pending, and forward to the OSS unit for
further processing (preparation and mailing of request for
information).

The imaging work flow system could be established to route all
like position/class codes to a particular analyst relieving
the lead analyst of the sorting function. After review and
evaluation the analyst would attach a note to the application
instructing the OSS unit what information is required and not be
concerned that the note may become lost. The same is true of
the other notations made on the current paper document. Notes
attached would follow the application throughout the
processing cycle (such as veteran's preference, Education and
Experience ratings, etc.). Any documentation received from the
applicant to support the application would be scanned and be
made a part of the original application file to be used in
further processing.

If at this time no additional work is required by the OSS
unit or the analyst unit, the application would be forwarded to
data entry for completion of the task of entering information
into the WANG system required to schedule the applicant for the
exam(s).

With the volumes of information contained in some applications
it is essential an indexing scheme be developed for the timely
retrieval of documents within an application file. This will
require an in depth study and classification of documents in
the application processing cycle be conducted. By grouping like
documents together for retrieval, the "search" time will be
greatly reduced. Examples of such would be; supervisory courses
taken through the Division of Personnel, Technical courses taken
to support the position being applied for, etc. With this
feature provided, when an application is being reviewed only
those documents relevant at that time would need to be
retrieved. Currently under the manual process the entire file
must sometimes be searched to find all related documentation.

This will be a major change in how the work effort of the
analyst is done currently. All work is now done from paper
documents and is sometimes hampered by missing documents.
The change to an imaging system to accomplish this work
effort will be a cultural change . In some areas it will
possibly slow the process but in the overall process the time

savings and ability to respond to inquiries very quickly will
outweigh the disadvantages of that change.→ A procedure for
using the imaging (paperless) system will need to be developed
and implemented to facilitate this change.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY CHANGES:

With the implementation of imaging, within the division, a need
for changes in roles and responsibilities of certain positions
will occur. The receptionist or other clerical positions will
need to be updated to reflect the role of operating the scanning
equipment. It will also need to reflect the responsibility of
indexing documents for retrieval at the time of scanning when
appropriate. A system administrator function will require
definition and implementation. This position will be
responsible for implementing the work flow process established
and the maintenance thereof to implement changes to the process
as they occur.

The analyst and OSS Unit roles would change in that they would
now perform their application processing function using the
imaging system versus the paper documents as in the past.
For this change to happen smoothly sufficient training will
need to be provided to staff using the imaging system to
perform their task. This will include training on how indexing
is used to retrieve documents, including the index combinations
that can be used to retrieve a specific document(s). With this
knowledge the manual log used to track a document before will
be easily replaced by automated indexing, and at the same time
provide the assurance a document can be retrieved easily and
quickly. The use of notes or other tracking materials can be
affixed to the application in chronological order to pass
pertinent information throughout the process.

Related to the role changes will be a need to provide equipment
to enhance the ability of personnel to perform their tasks at
an optimal level. This will require the addition of high
resolution, large screen monitors with the ability to display
documents side by side for review and comparison. The
workstations will require upgrading for staff operating the
imaging equipment. The workstations must be established with
the ergonomic impact in mind. The workstation must be conducive
to the work tasks being performed. There will be periods of
time when highly repetitive tasks will be performed and
ergonomics will play a very important role in the acceptance and
success of these tasks.

It is understood that the tedious task of filing and
retrieving of the manual files will be eliminated with imaging
and should provide balancing of the change to the scanning tasks
that will be required using the imaging system.

Outgoing correspondence that is currently prepared using a
manual process could be automated through the use of the

functionality provided by word processing. Form letters that
are currently completed manually could be completed online and
eliminate the need to prepare the request for correspondence
that is now required. This could be for correspondence asking
for additional information to complete the application
processing or informing the applicant they are now qualified
or not qualified for the position(s) being applied for.

For this to be possible, it will require the installation of
letter quality printers within the application processing
section sufficient to handle the volumes currently being
prepared manually.

SUMMARY:

Imaging introduces an opportunity to change the processing flow/steps in the application processing function within the Division of Personnel. It will allow an application to be entered and indexed upon receipt in the division. The application will then be accessible by anyone having access to the imaging system, with the necessary level of authority to see all or parts of the application, using the information keys defined to retrieve the application.

Imaging will provide the **Division of Personnel** the ability to respond to inquiries from applicants more quickly and also with more accuracy as documents related to an application, once imaged are available for the life cycle of the application. The application will now be available within seconds for review rather than the several minutes now required at times. Questions will be able to be answered during the conversation with the applicant rather than recording the request for information needed and then retrieving that information to be relayed to the applicant in either written form or a returned phone call. At times documents become separated from the file and a need arises to have that information resubmitted by the applicant. Imaging will eliminate this possibility provided the indexing is well defined and adhered to. By eliminating the **"lost document syndrome"**, the integrity of the process by the general public will be enhanced. The service level provided to the applicant by the division will be greatly improved and the ability to be more interactive will present a forum for more information to be shared or requested on a more timely basis. This ability to shorten the information gathering process will improve the perceived and real service level to and by the general public.

Imaging will provide the ability for work to be distributed to various analysts. Frequently, when an application has a request for multiple positions, they span categories of work and require different analyst to perform the review and evaluation. Imaging, with work flow routing, would allow certain categories to automatically be routed to the analyst to which that position is assigned for review and evaluation. The application would be available at the analyst desk for which responsibility for a particular position(s) is assigned. At the same time another analyst could be working with the same application for other position(s) at their desk. If information is pending from the applicant it can be noted and the system will notify the user that the request for information has been received (within the time allowed) or that it has not been received and allow follow up action to be taken or processing of the application to be stopped. Through the functionality provided by WINDOWS software several of the functions performed can be integrated on an individual desktop. It can provide the ability to have a 3270 session (e.g. MESH) running in one window, imaging in another, a spreadsheet in another, etc., and allow them to be viewed concurrently.

Imaging would also provide the ability for the receptionist to have access to the application at all points in processing. This revised processing flow will provide the receptionist with the ability to answer a high volume of the questions received related to an application.

Imaging upon receipt of the application and supporting documentation will also alleviate the misfiling of the application and documentation contained within it. It also will alleviate the "lost document". With scanning of the entire file upon receipt any information requiring a hard copy could be printed upon demand. Imaging would remove the ability to misplace or lose documents after processing by the receptionist upon receipt in the division.

If changes in processing allow the destruction of the application file after the imaging process takes place, a significant savings in time used in distributing, filing and retrieval functions would be realized. Along with this savings in time, floor space would be made available for other uses. This would also eliminate the current need to purge the files manually after either the six (6) months or three (3) year life of an application. The system would be implemented with those parameters in place and documents would be purged automatically upon those predefined expiration dates.

The ability would be present to track the number of applications by position code assigned to each analyst. The possibility would also exist to have an automated tracking of how long an application takes to process by different positions, such as Mental Health positions versus Corrections positions for the the same classification.

It must be noted that the system selected will determine the routing capabilities that will be available. It will also determine the level of reporting and tracking which can be accomplished. Any system selected will greatly improve the ability of the Division of Personnel to track an application, its associated documentation and at the same time respond to questions related to it in a more efficient and timely manner.

The success of imaging within the Division of Personnel will be determined by a strong commitment from upper management and the level of training received by the users and the system administrator(s). It is very important that individuals designated as users of the system be included in the process as imaging is brought in house and that they have input into how the system functions in relation to their day to day tasks. They may have very sound recommendations on work flow routing. They will have insight as to how imaging can be implemented to facilitate the application processing cycle and improve productivity, as well as reducing the elapsed time to process an application. By being made a part of the change to image processing, the resistance level will be greatly reduced and it will be "their" system being implemented.